

Application No. 09/878,92
Amendment dated October 15, 2003
Reply to Office Action of July 15, 2003

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-79 were filed originally in the present application, with claims 1, 37, 57, 67 and 73 being in independent format and the remaining claims being dependent therefrom.

In the present Office Action dated July 15, 2003 (the "Office Action"), a restriction requirement was made requiring Applicant to select one of the following claim groups:

- I. claims 1-66,
- II. claims 67-72,
- III. claims 73-79.

Applicant hereby elects original claims 1-66 and the invention of the claims in group I, as presently amended, for examination upon the merits in the present case.

By the amendments detailed above, claims 67-79 have been canceled without prejudice such that Applicant can pursue these claims through one or more subsequent divisional applications.

Claims 1-2, 10-11, 13-29, 33, 36-43, 45, 49-52, 55-61, 64 and 66 have been amended. Applicant has also herein requested the introduction of new claims 80-92 for examination upon the merits. These claims are directed to the invention of group I, and define further patentable subject matter. Support for these new claims and for the requested amendments is found throughout Applicant's specification, and no prohibited new matter has been introduced.

Examination upon the merits for claims 1-66 and 80-92, and the issuance of a timely Notice of Allowance are respectfully requested.

Applicant has transmitted this Response and Amendment concurrently with a transmittal serving as a Petition for Extension of Time, and has included a check for payment of the fee believed due in conjunction with that petition.

While Applicant has introduced new claims, it is not believed that any fee for additional claims is due at this time given Applicant's cancellation herein of claims 67-79. Thus, Applicant is not submitting any payment for additional claims.

If there are any other fees due at this time, or if Applicant has miscalculated any extension of time or additional claims fees associated with this Response and Amendment,

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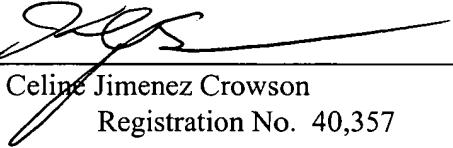
please charge any fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1349.

The Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned attorneys by telephone to discuss any matters if the Examiner feels such discussions may expedite the progress of the present application toward allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: October 15, 2003

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